PART SIX

FISCAL, LITERARY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR
History has demonstrated repeatedly that there are always many more losers than winners in the theater of war, particularly when non-combatants are affected. Examples need not be as drastic as the tremendous losses of life in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the hands of an atom bomb, nor as the mass enslavements following Roman conquests of lands surrounding the Mediterranean. In fact, war can adversely affects more than those caught in the crossfire. Purveyance, the system on which Edward III (1327–1377) depended for the effective victualing of his soldiers and garrisons during the Hundred Years War, readily illustrates how those required to pay for a war can easily become its victims.

The Emergence of Purveyance

In simple terms, purveyance was an undisputed royal prerogative that enabled the king to obtain from his realm, by compulsory sale, those goods that he needed for supplying his household or military. This involved a manipulation of the market system through the forstalling of markets and the establishment of rates favorable to the king and his purchasing agents. In effect, the crown created an atmosphere in which those peasants who had a surplus of victuals had no means of disposing of it except to the crown. In the case of household purveyance, representatives of the various divisions of the royal household, such as the scullery and the pantry, would scour the verge, a twelve-mile radius extending from the king’s current place of residence, for the required items, typically foodstuffs. The officers routinely provided a receipt, known as a tally, to the person or house from whom the goods were taken, which could later be exchanged for money. Purveyance that provided supplies only for the king’s household was characterized by small but frequent collections by royal officials. Conversely, military purveyance functioned on a much grander scale, with significantly